

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /041 W

-----030656Z 031941 /15

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FM AMCONSUL SAPPORO

TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 423

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, JA, UR

SUBJECT: JAPAN-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP AND CULTURAL CENTER CONSTRUCTED
IN SAPPORO

REF: SAPPORO A-13 (1976)

1. SUMMARY: INITIAL CONSTRUCTION FOR HOKKAIDO JAPAN-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP AND CULTURAL CENTER, SCHEDULED TO OPEN IN MAY, HAS BEEN COMPLETED IN SAPPORO. ALTHOUGH IT IS OSTENSIBLY PURELY JAPANESE ENTERPRISE, CENTER SEEMS LIKELY TO SERVE AS USEFUL ASSET TO RUSSIANS IN THEIR IMAGE-BUILDING EFFORTS IN NORTHERN JAPAN. END SUMMARY

2. CONSTRUCTION OF MAIN BUILDING FOR HOKKAIDO JAPAN-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP AND CULTURAL CENTER (REPAIR) HAS BEEN COMPLETED IN SAPPORO, AND FACILITY IS SCHEDULED TO OPEN TO PUBLIC IN MAY. SPONSORED BY HOKKAIDO JAPAN-SOVIET TRADE ASSOCIATION AND BUILT ON LAND REPORTEDLY DONATED BY ASSOCIATION'S PRESIDENT, YASUSABURO SHIBANO, CENTER IS SAID TO HAVE COST OVER \$1 MILLION. IT IS LARGE TWO-STORY BUILDING TOPPED BY DOME AND OF VAGUELY RUSSIAN ARCHITECTURAL STYLE. IT CONTAINS LOBBY, EXHIBITION ROOMS AND LIBRARY. ADDITIONAL CONSTRUCTION OF SMALL THEATER, AUDITORIUM AND CONFERENCE ROOMS IS PROJECTED FOR SAME SITE.

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3. CENTER'S LIBRARY WILL CONTAIN BOOKS, NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES RELATED TO THE SOVIET UNION. IN ADDITION, CENTER WILL BE SITE OF ART EXHIBITS AND PHOTO DISPLAYS AND WILL OFFER RUSSIAN LANGUAGE COURSES AND EVEN FASHION SHOWS. IT WILL ALSO SERVE AS CONTACT POINT FOR HOKKAIDO CULTURAL, SPORTS, YOUTH AND WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS INTERESTED IN EXCHANGE PROGRAMS WITH RUSSIAN

COUNTERPARTS AND WILL ALSO PROVIDE INFORMATION FOR TRAVELERS GOING TO SOVIET UNION.

4. RUSSIANS HERE HAVE GIVEN CENTER STRONG PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT, AND CONSUL GENERAL MAMIN HAS PROMISED THAT CENTER WILL HAVE HIS ACTIVE COOPERATION. MOREOVER, SOVIET-JAPAN SOCIETY HAS MADE AN INITIAL DONATION OF 5,000 BOOKS, INCLUDING A LARGE NUMBER INTENDED FOR CHILDREN. CHILDREN'S PAINTINGS, COSTUMES, FILMS AND OTHER ITEMS ARE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE SOON, AND CENTER WILL ALSO FEATURE RECORD COLLECTION OF CLASSICAL MUSIC, FOLK SONGS, LABORERS' SONGS AND CHILDREN'S SONGS. RUSSIAN WOMAN IS NOW ACTIVELY ASSISTING CENTER STAFF IN PREPARING INDEX CARDS FOR BOOKS AND ORGANIZING OTHER MATERIALS.

5. COMMENT: FEATURING SUBSTANTIAL COLLECTION OF MATERIALS AND HOUSED IN LARGE, NEW BUILDING SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR PURPOSE, CENTER SEEMS LIKELY TO BECOME USEFUL SOVIET PROPAGANDA OUTLET. BECAUSE IT OUTWARDLY HAS NO DIRECT CONNECTION WITH SOVIET GOVERNMENT AND IS APPARENTLY PURELY JAPANESE ENTERPRISE, ITS CREDIBILITY SHOULD BE ENHANCED. SOME INFORMED SOURCES, HOWEVER, ARE CONVINCED THAT, IN FACT, FUNDING AND OPERATION OF THIS CENTER HAVE BEEN MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH INDIRECT SUBSIDY BY RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT. REPORTEDLY, RUSSIANS PERMITTED SHIBANO'S ASSOCIATION TO PURCHASE LUMBER AT EXTREMELY LOW PRICES WITH UNDERSTANDING THAT PROFITS DERIVED BY SALE IN HOKKAIDO WOULD BE FUNNELED INTO CONSTRUCTION. WHATEVER ACCURACY OF SUCH REPORTS, SHIBANO'S PERSONAL CLOSE TIES WITH RUSSIANS AND FACT THAT MATERIALS WILL BE PROVIDED AND PROGRAMS ORGANIZED BY RUSSIANS, SEEM TO INDICATE THAT CENTER WILL SERVE SOVIETS AS VALUABLE ASSET IN THEIR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IMAGE BUILDING AND GOODWILL-PROMOTING EFFORTS HERE IN NORTHERN JAPAN.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CULTURAL CENTERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 03-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SAPPOR00012
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770038-0577
Format: TEL
From: SAPPORO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770276/aaaacpiw.tel
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vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/19c532cc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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